

Thanks for Coming Out Tonight

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Thanks for Coming Out Tonight

by [katrinnaaaaaaaaa](#)

Summary

“So, what do you go by? What should I call you?” Dr. K smiles at his guest through the webcam.

“Oh, yeah, uhmmm... George, George is fine, George is good.”

“Okay, George. What works for you works with me. So- what are we here to talk about today?”

George breathes, almost as if he’s reading through a pre-written script in his head. In all fairness, that’s basically what he was doing. His leg bounces, hidden underneath his desk.

“I guess about mental health, about my mental health.”

--

George throughout all his life has been grappling with anxiety. Will a show that aims to help streamers with their mental health be able to push him to finally think clearly and leave the past behind?

Notes

The characters in this fic are based off real life people. These situations are purely fictional, and I don't claim that they have any truth to them. It's just a work of fiction. Some of it ties

into my own life, but other things are based off research. If any of the real life people that the characters are based off of wish for this fic to be removed, I will. If there's any incorrect research, please tell me. If there's any glorification of mental health issues, tell me that as well. Thank you.

Intro

“So, what do you go by? What should I call you?” Dr. K smiles at his guest through the webcam. They’re now live with thousands of viewers tuning in to watch.

The Healthy Gamer streams are livestreams in which Dr. K gives advice to Twitch content creators. Far too often has Dr. K noticed that there was a strong stigma around mental health, especially concerning “influencers” as some like to refer to them as.

Plenty of streamers on Twitch are young. Cast into the limelight at an early age, early twenties, mid twenties. Not everyone on Twitch was in that demographic, of course, but there was a good amount of them. That sort of attention and pressure can heavily affect people of all ages in all honesty. However, it was the younger people in particular that concerned him.

When you’re young, chances are, you don’t know much. You think you do, though. But more often than not, younger people haven’t yet learned how to cope properly with the fame, stress, and expectations that come with the job. They don’t know what to do with the attention. Dr. K has seen it all. Depression, narcissism, drug dependency. Because of that, Dr. K wanted to change how Twitch viewed mental health and how Twitch viewed its streamers.

Content creators aren’t exactly viewed as humans with emotions. It makes sense: from the viewers’ perspective, all they see is the image that is presented to the public. A manufactured, edited persona. However, streaming is much more exposing than processed videos. Streamers interact with their fans on a more personal level and in real-time, and the viewers get a more in-depth look into content creators than is possible on other platforms of social media.

A lot can be said on stream, for better or for worse. Moments that would have been cut out during editing end up being clipped and reposted for all to see.

The audience gets to know their favourite content creators better this way. The viewers certainly feel as if they know a lot about the people they’re watching. The truth is that the audience doesn’t know as much as they think they do. They never do.

Donations pass underneath them as the two start their conversation. GeorgeNotFound gives a half-smile to the viewers, not yet processing exactly what he’s doing. “Oh, yeah, uhmmm... George, George is fine, George is good.”

“Okay, George. What works for you, works for me,” George gives Dr. K a nod at what he had said, readjusting his chair at the same time.

The eyes of thousands of viewers were boring into the Brit, trying to read his mind, learn all his secrets. He knows he should relax, but he can’t. George’s eyes briefly flick to the chat. It doesn’t go unnoticed by the other man.

Dr. Kanojia is a very perceptive man. He has to be in his field of work, but perhaps even more so on these livestreams, where body language is even harder to decipher than in person. He purses his lips slightly. “George, do you have chat open?” The 23 year-old’s eyes flit back to his main screen, panicked to be caught in the act.

“If I can’t look at the chat, you can’t look at the chat. That’s the deal,” Dr. K places his hands on the armrests of his chair.

George’s neck warms up, and he places his hand there in an attempt to cool it. “Right, sorry,” he

mumbles in a hurry, exiting out of the chat's live feed. He's never done this before. He's new to being so vulnerable online.

There's only a momentary pause until the doctor starts up again. "So, how are you doing tonight, George?"

George looks up and mentally composes himself, hiding his emotions in the pocket of his hoodie and stuffing it deeper in there. "I'mmmm... doing well tonight I suppose, how are you, Mr- Dr. K?"

Dr. K takes a mental note of George's behaviour, as he does every time he's talking to a patient or to a guest on his stream. Oh, how he longs for a pen and paper.

He files and categorizes his client's body language and speech patterns. *Hands in hoodie, slightly slumped. Closed off perhaps? He was looking at the chat, which is typical. With the way he's speaking, he seems to be nervous. Also typical.*

"I'm doing well tonight, thank you. I don't know if you've ever been to any type of therapy," *I've had a type of therapy before, George thinks, "...but I just wanted to preface that this time is for you and me. So- what are we here to talk about today?"*

George breathes, almost as if he's reading through a pre-written script in his head. In all fairness, that's basically what he's doing. His leg bounces, hidden underneath his desk.

"I guess about mental health, about my mental health," George starts.

A couple weeks prior, George had a moment on stream. It was a moment that turned into a clip, that turned into segments of compilation videos on YouTube. It spammed his Twitter feed and served to constantly remind him of what had happened.

George and Clay were streaming with about five other people, only two of which George knew: Callahan and Nik. On most days, this would have been fine. That day was not one of those days.

There was chatter and banter, voices overlapping and fighting for dominance. The voices seemed amplified past how they should sound. Voices that he'd usually enjoy hearing now sounded harsh. It was difficult to keep up with what any individual person was saying, forget all of them at once. He was feeling overwhelmed. So many voices were talking at once. The Brit couldn't handle it, not on that day.

His facecam was on during that stream. The audience could see his eyes flicker from his keyboard to his screen with the game on it to the chat and to his phone. George's jaw was clenched, his body filled with tension. The game was forgotten as he tried desperately to ground himself.

Dizzy, he felt dizzy, *why were they all talking at once?*

Discreetly, he texts Clay, "*gonna end the stream early cant*".

George leaves the Discord voice call without a word to them. He swallows and speaks to the viewers, "Chat, I'm gonna hafta end early. Sorry."

And with that, he abruptly closes the stream. He doesn't let himself see what chat says after that.

The Londoner grips his own wrist in an attempt to self-soothe. George brings himself to reality.

Dr. K speaks up. "So- tell me about that. What exactly do you mean? What are we talking about?"

George knows Dr. K's stream is a safe space. Despite there being thousands of viewers, he's meant to pretend it's just the two of them. He isn't quite sure how to.

"Well, I- I've been anxious recently and feeling off, I guess you could say. A little, uh, overwhelmed at times..." George hopes that he communicated how he feels effectively.

Dr. K moves his hand from his mouth and transitions it to hold up a "pause" signal. "Let's pause right there- what exactly do you mean when you say that? When you say, 'anxious' and 'overwhelmed'?"

George takes a moment to try to think of what to say. He's no therapist. He knows when he feels overwhelmed but he doesn't know how to describe it.

I have to try, at least. "Well, sometimes when... a lot of people are talking... I kinda shutdown. And when I say anxious, I feel as if I want things to always be good, and I want to be safe, and I want things to go well, and I want people to like me, and like... stuff like that."

Good, good. I think that was fine, that was okay. God, I don't want to mess this up.

Dr. K seems to understand what he's saying, luckily. "Okay, no, yeah, I hear what you're saying." George's shoulders slump in relief. "Was this really only recently or is this a recurring issue that you have?"

His eyes are focused on George, fixed with a calculating but warm stare.

George stutters, "Oh, I uh, I- I guess it's recurring. It's just more now than usual."

There's a slight pause, signifying that Dr. K was thinking. He starts up again, saying: "Okay- Is there anything in particular that might have triggered this more recent surge of anxiety, perfectionism, and self-preservation?"

Anxiety, perfectionism, and self-preservation. It's nice to hear what he has been feeling in more proper terms.

George thinks back to *that day and how it felt to hear those words. Those stinging, cold words, words so cold that they crawled through the phone receiver and filled George with a lasting numbness.*

The Brit gives a nervous laugh. "Well, haha, yeah there was one thing actually- " *ding*

George's text notification alert sounds. It's from a familiar number, one that warms away the numbness. "I'm so sorry, can I briefly read this text?" George's hand reaches for his phone, but he waits for permission. He feels rude, but he'll try his best to make it quick. It will make him feel better, too.

"Of course, go right ahead," George goes ahead and reads the message on the screen. "As long as it isn't something from Twitter or from a fan or something negative. Who's the text from, if you don't mind me asking?"

George gives a little smile as he reads the text.

Good luck, babe! Relax a bit. You'll do great :)

"... A friend or a partner? Family maybe?"

"My boyfriend," George blurts, not thinking. His smile stays on his face.

Then he realized. My boyfriend.

Oh no, he thinks. Did I just say that?

George for a moment feels his face burn. He feels the urge to apologise.

"I'm s-"

"Okay, take your time," Dr. K says casually.

Okay. George releases a breath he didn't know he was holding. Okay.

It's okay? Just like that?

He shouldn't have been surprised at the casual, nonchalant reaction. George has been primed all his life to think that him coming out would be difficult and met with resistance. He thinks back to *that day*.

It was thirty minutes before his stream was supposed to start. He was putting on his blue hoodie and preparing other things. That was when his phone rang.

A number appeared in the caller ID. Instead of feeling warmth and butterflies, he felt a cold hand grip his heart and squeeze.

No... no.

George tried his best to calm his breathing. It was quickly becoming erratic and painful. He couldn't calm it. It was killing him. He weighed his options.

Not answering the call would lead to his phone being blown up for the rest of the day. He didn't want to think about it for that long.

He felt as if his phone itself was radiating black tendrils of terror. He was scared to even touch it. He felt as if he'd touch it and be pulled into a pit of darkness; he was sure of it.

Answering the call meant pain, however. Answering the call meant questions, criticism, unhappiness. Did he want to?

No, I don't.

He hit the answer button.

"Hel-"

George couldn't get a single word out before he was interrupted.

"George. Good for you to finally answer. I wanted to talk to you about something," said his father.

For almost the full thirty minutes before he was supposed to stream, George numbly zoned out of the rant that was assaulting his ear. He caught some things every once in a while that stood out, but besides that, his mind was cloudy. His right arm hung limply to his side as if it too was giving up on trying.

"I heard something about a relationship..." *fog*

“I was lenient to you about it in the past...” *lies*

“Why couldn’t you have been a normal son? For us, for the family?” *why*

“I was under the impression that I hadn’t wasted thousands of pounds on conversion therapy...” *cold*

“It won’t even last long, so I don’t know why you bother...” *numb*

“Not even to mention your, uhm, job...” *stop it, please-*

“... and I just wanted to say that I expected more from you.” And with that, the man stopped.

George had barely even processed that his father stopped talking. He took this chance to speak, but his voice was barely working.

“Father, I-”

Once again he was interrupted; once again he wasn’t listened to, like all the years before this.

“No. Don’t.” And with that, the call had ended.

George’s mind drifts back to the present moment. He shakes his head and sends a quick “*thx :))) love u ttyl*” to Clay, then puts down his phone to redirect his focus to Dr. Kanojia.

“Sorry for that,” George apologizes.

“Why- why do you feel the need to apologize for that? It’s okay to take a pause.”

That catches him off guard. “Oh, uhm, I just don’t want to be rude to you or the audience, and we’re live, so...”

Dr. K nods in acknowledgement. “You know, George, this time isn’t for the audience- well, it is, but you’re not here to entertain them. You and I are here for YOU,” says the psychiatrist, punctuating his last word with a politician’s thumb pointed towards his guest.

George wraps his head around the statement. He’d heard Dr. K say this before, but he hadn’t quite thought of the implications. *You’re not here to entertain them. He’s here for himself. To learn. To be open. To be honest.*

The Brit takes a deep breath of contemplation. “Yeah, yeah, you’re right. Time for me.”

Dr. K smiles and takes that as a sign to proceed. “So. I believe we were talking about an event that had happened recently that, you know, maybe- maybe triggered heightened feelings of anxiety? Would you like to talk about that? I don’t quite know if it was something that was public or if it was just something in your private life, I’m a bit of a *boomer as they say, which means that I don’t exactly know these things about my guests.*”

George chuckled quietly at the doctor’s joke. Then, it became George’s turn to nod as he readies himself to open up. “Well, I had recently gotten a call...”

The streamer goes on to explain what had happened: how his dad had called him, reviled him for what felt like both an eternity and a minute at the same time, what he had said about him, bringing up old memories that he thought he was past, and how he had to face thousands of people and his friends not five minutes after and how he barely had time to prepare for it.

At the end of his explanation, George finds his throat dry and his hands shaky. It's his first time telling someone other than Clay and his mom about that day. For two whole weeks, George had been ignoring question after question from his fans about that stream. The first week had been much worse than the second, as fans tend to forget those things easily. But that didn't stop the stray question here and there. Both him and Clay had decided to go completely silent about it, neither wanting to address it.

Dr. K has been silently listening to George rant. His hands are to his mouth, and he looks like he's giving his guest his full attention.

"So- can I think for a second?"

"Yeah, that's alright."

The psychiatrist did this often. It didn't mean anything. It didn't mean that he was judging his client. It didn't mean that he was in shock. He liked thinking before speaking and choosing his words carefully, and he didn't really care if there was a pause in the stream. The chat knew and understood, too.

Dr. K starts, "Okay. So what I heard and what you told me is that basically: your father called you, you picked up, and he spent half an hour insulting you based on your- on your sexuality," Dr. K holds out one finger, "your relationship," he holds up another, "and for... taking advantage of a wonderful opportunity presented to you and doing what you love as a job?" He's now holding up three fingers.

George takes a breath. "Yeah, I mean, well that's-"

"That's *fucked*."

George stops in his tracks. First because he forgot that Dr. Kanojia swore in his streams, and second because he didn't expect that response.

He knows logically and in his head that the stuff his father had put him through in the past and the stuff that he still puts him through in the present weren't right. Clay had told him before about how much he wanted to 'beat the shit out of that bastard', but he just felt like his boyfriend was the protective type. His mother was another story.

So George feels a surge of relief upon hearing those two little words.

"Yeah. Yeah, I suppose it is."

He gives a soft smile. "Sorry that I'm smiling, I just like... I don't know, but it feels nice to hear you say that."

Dr. K returns the smile, albeit more somber than his guest's. He decides to push the conversation forward.

"So- let me ask you one thing: would you be comfortable with me asking more about this situation and things relating to it, or would you prefer to bounce to another topic?"

George weighs his options. He says slowly, "I think we can talk about this topic now since we're here... and see what else there is after."

Dr. K nods his head. "Okay," he agrees. "There is actually something I wanted to ask you about. And we don't have to talk about it now, we can talk about it later on our own time off camera. It's a

touchy subject; if you don't wanna talk about it, that's completely understandable...

"What was that about conversion therapy?"

George takes a sharp inhale.

Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

In which George reflects on his past, and Dr. Kanojia is patient.

Chapter Notes

hello! forgot this story existed for a little bit, and honestly, haven't been watching livestreams lately. wowza tho, thanks for all the kudos! as always, I enjoy your feedback :) please enjoy and remember to identify triggers, stressful situations, and your reactions in your daily life

edit: sorry about the lack of italics, i can't figure out what I'm doing wrong and I'm this close to asking reddit lmao. i could do it in the first chapter idk why i can't do it anymore lol

"What was that about conversion therapy?"

George takes a sharp inhale.

He knew that this conversation would come the second he mentioned it, but that didn't mean he's prepared for it. What should he say? How much is too much? Should he even say anything about it?

There are times when George feels like he never even went. It feels fake like he made it up in his head so he can have a tragic backstory that will get sympathy from others. It feels like a long, six-month dream.

But then, he takes a deep breath and plunges into the deep end. "My father sent me to a program to try to 'fix me' or whatever. It was after I had told my mom that I realized I like guys. It was scary."

The Brit's mind fades to an image of him as a fourteen-year-old sitting at the dining room table after school with his mom standing next to him. He was sobbing wildly, hands in his hair, and his elbows propping up his fragile figure. Every sob raked through his entire body. George felt each recurring wave of dread in his arms, in his hands, in his stomach, in his entire body. He was shaking. He was curled up like a turtle; he felt rattled and tormented.

His mom hugged him and spoke softly, "Hush, darling, hush. Don't cry, you'll get sick. You'll get sick, dear. It's not good for you." George continued to sob.

She gave him paper towels that felt rough against his nose and face. His mom repeated the same thing over and over again: "Don't cry, you'll get sick."

It didn't really help.

Dr. K speaks up, pulling George out of his stupor. "It must have been an absolute nightmare,

George. I'm sorry you had to go through that."

George can only purse his lips in response. He feels a familiar tension in his upper body and tries his best to relax his muscles. He finds it difficult.

"It's the past and all. But it was a long six months."

The psychiatrist adjusts his sleeves. "Let me just say this, George: just because it's in the past doesn't mean that it can't still affect you in the present. And if- if it doesn't," he looks up at the ceiling, looking for the right words. "If it doesn't, that's great, but if it would be helpful to you, we could certainly talk about it. I don't care if it was two years ago or two days ago, if you'd like to talk about it, go for it. Absolutely go for it. I won't make you do it. It's really your choice."

George absorbs Dr. K's words, taking in what they mean and how they apply to him. It feels nice to hear him say these things, validating his pain when it scarcely has been done before.

"I wouldn't mind talking about it, but I'd like to not be too... detailed in it..."

He thinks back to those days, those painful six months. He feels the pain in flashes of memory, and it's the impact that he remembers more clearly.

It was a two-story house, farther south than where he lived and more isolated. George slept in a room downstairs, the bed facing the wall. There were two other people in there with him.

Dr. K adjusts his sleeves. "Okay- again, what works for you, works for me."

The Brit nods. He lingers in his contemplative silence. *Where to begin? George thinks.*

Donations float underneath their webcams while they quietly sit. Two dollars here, three hundred rupees there, and a supportive message every so often. "Want me to give you a minute, George?" The psychiatrist says after a bit of waiting.

George shakes his head in an attempt to clear the fog that threatens to cloud his mind. "I really just... don't know where to start, haha," he states, ending with a nervous chuckle.

Dr. K considers if it would be better to wait for George or if it would be better to prompt him to get the conversation started. He decides to prompt him.

"How about you tell me something that... I know I said to ignore the chat, but tell me something that the viewers would benefit the most from," Dr. K pauses. "What do you think that is, George?"

George hesitates, "I- well, uhm. How it affects me, maybe?"

Dr. K nods enthusiastically, "Yeah, sure, that's exactly right, how it affects you!" The man smiles and throws up his hands as if George just solved world peace. "And sometimes, that might involve backstory, but that won't have to be my focus or yours. I- I want you to say what you want to say. You don't have to force yourself to say anything you're uncomfortable with sharing or don't wanna share. We can talk about whatever you want to."

Truthfully, the correct answer was whatever George responded with. If he had said, "My cat, my cat is the most important thing for the viewers to hear about", Dr. K would have responded the same way. It was all about encouraging George to say what he really wanted to and to get the ball rolling and oil the gears in his head. Specifically, saying "what would be most helpful to the audience to hear" switches his mindset from thinking that he's triggering others or seeking attention to thinking that he's helping others. This reframing can relax a client on the show and

get them to talk about their problems, but it also truly can help the audience as well.

George bites his lip nervously, then lets out a breath. He decides to give a bit of context before talking about how conversion therapy affected him, despite how hard it is. "I think it just... I actually wasn't hurt that bad compared to the other kids there. I was one of the younger ones, and so maybe that's why they went easier on me.

"I remember waking up every day and having to write the same thing a hundred times, 'Marriage is between a man and a woman'. We all had to write that, all 5 of us. They split us up by 'girls and boys', " George uses air quotes around these words, "But we had a girl in our room. She's straight actually, but her grandparents think she's gay and crossdressing, and just the thought of that still... I wonder if she's okay..."

He shakes his head for a split second of clarity, just long enough time to reset and rethink.

"There's just a lot. I don't wanna talk about it too much but. I don't know.

"Whenever we messed up, it didn't matter what, but when we messed up, they'd yell at us, all of them at once. And even now when I hear a lot of people speaking at once, it's like, it's like... I don't know."

Dr. K nods at George in acknowledgment. He's proud to see the Brit open up, even though he can tell he's not very good with feelings. He wonders what pushed George to be on this show, what pushed George to put himself in such a vulnerable position.

"I hear you, I hear you, dude. That sounds difficult," the psychiatrist pauses for a second, thinking about the gravity of what he'll say next. "George, I wanted to ask: what made you wanna be on this show?"

The said man gave a look of brief surprise and a hint of guilt, so Dr. K quickly corrects himself. "Oh, uh, I don't mean that in a bad way! I'm glad to have you on the show, you know?"

George's shoulders ever so subtly relax. "Okay, haha, I thought so... That would be weird if you- yeah. Anyways, uhm. Why I wanted to be on the show?"

With his chin resting in his entangled hands, Dr. K nods quickly and encouragingly. "Yeah, well, you don't seem used to talking about your feelings, so I was wondering what made you wanna open up with thousands of people watching. It's a big thing to commit to."

A look of relief and understanding flashed the streamer's face. "Yeah. You're not wrong." He shifts slightly, mindful of the phone in his back pocket. "Actually, it was the boyfriend I mentioned before. He said I needed to really push my comfort zone. He said that I could think of this as an opportunity to help others, to help people in my community that are struggling, to help stop the stigma around mental health. He said I could also use it to explain the thing that happened on steam before..."

Dr. K waits for George to finish before he speaks up. He's patient and absorbs what his client is saying. "Smart guy it sounds like... The thing on stream?"

"Oh! Yeah, the story about the day my father called from earlier. Fans have been asking about why I ended the stream abruptly ever since, and my boyfriend and I figured that it was better if I explained..."

"Ah, I understand. Yeah, it's not uncommon for streamers to explain unexplained happenstances on this show since it acts as a safe space, so I get it. Yeah, that makes sense."

Time and time again the doctor exhibits patience. He's so good at both ignoring the audience and paying attention to what would benefit the audience at the same time. George wonders how he achieves such a balance.

Meanwhile, the chat is going crazy.

Dream boyfriend ??????

DNF DNF DNF DNF DNF-

hi youtube

guys relax its probably a different guy let him chill

IS IT DWEAM ??? BIBLETHUMP BIBLETHUMP BIBLETHUMP

Dr. Kanojia has no idea what's going on with the chat. He knows who Dream is, actually, but he doesn't understand what the chat is going on about. He decides to not mention it to George. He has a feeling that wouldn't be appropriate.

George and the doctor continue speaking for a couple of hours. They talked about things that trigger George's anxiety, small moments in childhood that caused a great amount of pain, and parts of his relationship with the "unknown" man.

He mentioned his mother, with her rough paper towels and lack of understanding. He mentioned how he felt alone after going to conversion therapy for six months and how he didn't have many friends for a while. He talked about how he turned to gaming and coding when he felt as if the physical world had failed him. They discussed his poor sleeping habits, often sleeping past important events that he needed to attend; sleeping was often easier than dealing with a potentially triggering situation. Dream SMP events often had calls with a dozen or so people on them.

They talked about cognitive behavioural therapy and dialectical behavioural therapy and different options for him to consider long-term. Dr. Kanojia suggested getting a therapist that specializes in LGBTQIA+ issues, and George showed interest.

The doctor and his client soon found that they've been streaming for way too long. They set up a mental health plan for George and say their final goodbyes to the chat. With that, the two end the stream.

George sits in front of his computer, processing the events of today. He relaxes back into his chair and takes a deep breath. He feels grounded. A vibration knocks him out of his tranquility, and his phone screen wakes.

dWeaM anD GoGy dNf pogU -Sappitus Nappitus

o_O -bad

GEORGE! -dweam

WHAT YOU NEVER TOLD ME THAT -dweam

boyfriend ('w `*) hehe -dweam*

He couldn't help but smile.

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